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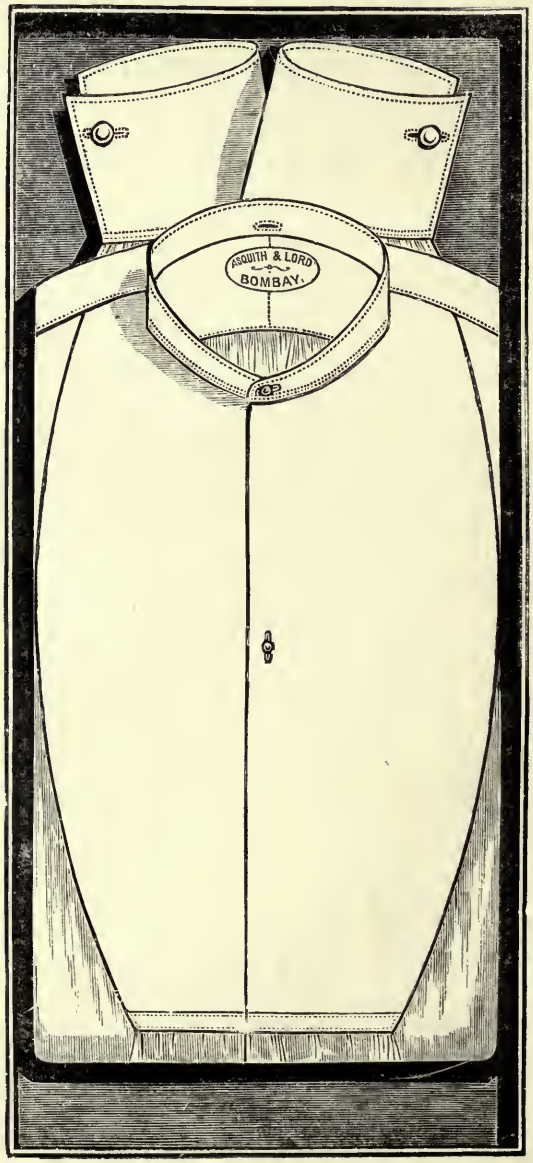

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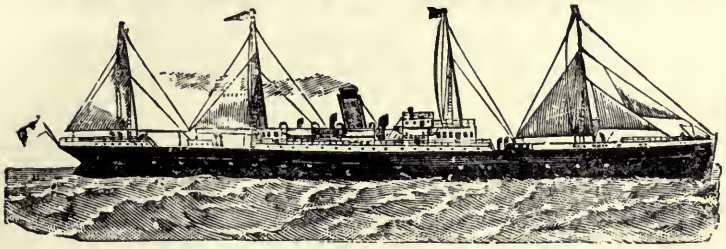

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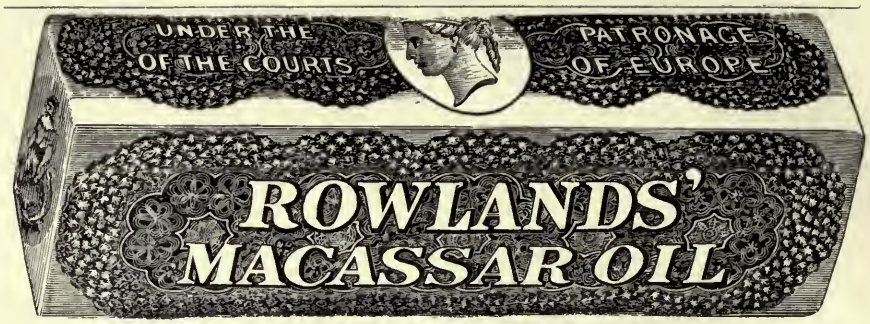

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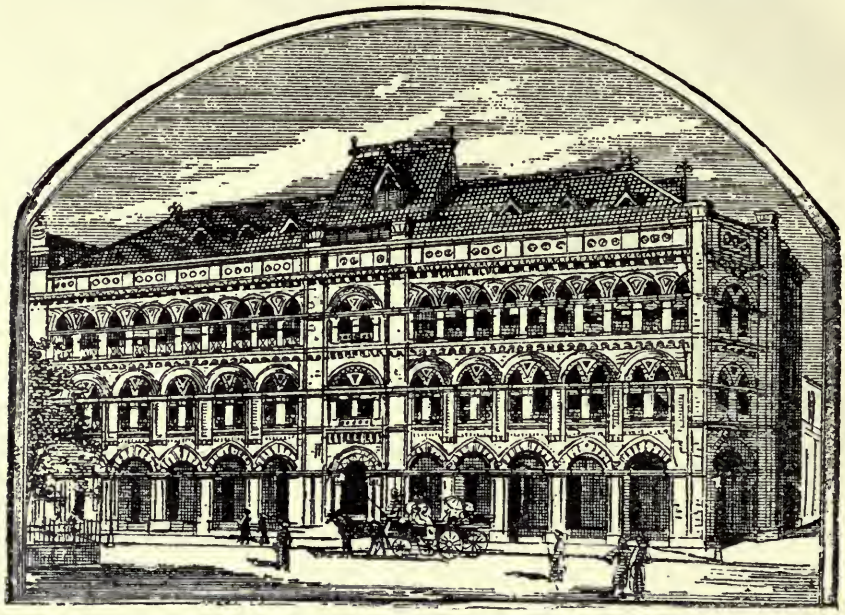

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PREFACE.

The "Gorgeous East," if robbed of the vivid colouring which is its greatest charm, would cease to please the only one of the senses to which it ever appeals. By the same token, plain photographs fail to convey an adequate idea of the real picture, to those whom fortune—or misfortune—has never sent Eastward, and it is with a view, therefore, to enable travellers to present to their friends at home a true rendering of the varied and picturesque costumes worn by Natives of India in general, and of Bombay in particular, that this little book is presented to the public.

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE word "caste" is now familiar to most English-speaking people, and it is perhaps almost superfluous to mention that it is applied to designate the religious and social distinctions among the Hindoos. It is properly speaking not an Indian word, having been adapted from the Portuguese *casta*, signifying race, kind or quality. Originally there existed but four castes: the Bràhmans, or priests; the Kshatriyas, or warriors; the Vaishyas, or mercantile and agricultural class; and the Shùdras, or servants. But the divisions and subdivisions which have arisen from time to time have now become so numerous that, in Wilson's book upon this subject, we find a list of one hundred and thirty-four distinct castes, besides many hundreds of others, which are not recognised. He says: "A caste is any of the classes or divisions of Hindoo society. The authority of caste rests partly on legendary fables, partly on verbal tradition, partly on the injunctions of priests, and partly on the caprice and convenience of its votaries. . . . The rules, and customs, and prejudices, and breaches and compromises of caste are numerous and capricious, and complicated beyond conception."

It was formerly customary for Bràhman priests to wear, as a distinguishing mark, three horizontal lines upon their forehead; for those of the same caste engaged in business, three perpendicular lines; and for other people, a red spot. Now, however, there is no certain outward indication by which a particular caste

may be known, any man being at liberty to assume what mark he pleases, but a sure index to a Hindoo is the tuft of hair on the crown of the head only, no other class of the community wearing their hair in this manner.

The FRONTISPIECE will show at a glance some of the many varieties of head-dress which are worn by the inhabitants of different parts of the country. Commencing from the top left-hand corner, we have the Bhattia turban, worn by the people who hail from Cutch; the two pictures next adjoining represent respectively a merchant from Central India and a Lavána, the latter hailing from the district lying between Bhawnagar and Ahmedabad. The next picture, on the left, is that of a Lucknow Mohamedan, that on the right a Mussalman also, from Ajmere, the centre portrait representing a young Nepaulese priest, known as a Gosàvi. The Mooltàni, wearing a small round turban, adjoins a Jewish priest from Bagdad, and the head to the right of him is that of a Borah, or Mohamedan trader. The last three portraits are those of—first, a Hindoo ascetic who wears his hair exceedingly long. This he plaits and coils about his head after the manner of a turban. The peculiar appearance of his face is due to a very liberal application of ashes, with which he frequently covers his whole body. The second picture represents a Sinhalese man, the article upon his head being a comb. The third and last portrait in the group is that of a Parsee, the *topi* being of a shape adopted by some members of the Parsee community in preference to that more usually worn by them.

THE BRÀHMAN.

In Hindoo society the Bràhman is pre-eminent. Whatever may be his worldly position, whether rich or poor, high or low, he is a person to be revered by those of other castes, and no amount of wealth can make them his social equal.

As he is taught from his earliest infancy to respect himself, both in word and deed, it is not surprising to find among this caste the most cleanly as well as the most polite members of the community. They are usually well educated intelligent men, and although many now follow other than priestly vocations, they still retain to a very large degree the respect and obedience formerly exacted from members of all other castes.

According to Hindoo law it is considered a condescension on the part of a Bràhman to accept a present from a man of a lower caste, and the gift is supposed to bring manifold blessings to the donor. Land, given to Bràhmans, secures for the giver the right to heaven; an umbrella, a cool skin when walking in the sun; perfumes, freedom from objectionable smells, and so on *ad infinitum*.

While it is obvious that the old Hindoo laws have been arranged by this caste with a view to their own particular profit and advantage, it is but fair to remark that the strictest moral discipline is inculcated among them. A youth is enjoined to render the greatest reverence and attention to his preceptor. His religious instruction must commence at dawn, and continue almost uninterruptedly throughout the day. He is commanded "to abstain from flesh, powders and perfumes,

BRĀHMAN.

the wearing of sandals or shoes, using an umbrella, from wrath, covetousness, dancing, singing and falsehood." Very many members of this caste become ascetics, and wander from town to town, accepting such alms as may be given them, but asking nothing. Others, again, impose upon themselves certain pains and penalties, as did the monks of old, but for severity of discipline the Hindoo is far in advance of his European brother. A common form of penance is to refrain from sitting or lying down. In these cases a long stick is carried, by means of which when sleep becomes necessary, the body is propped against a tree or an accommodating wall. Another, and not uncommon form of expiation, is to raise one arm above the head, with the forefinger pointing to heaven. After some months it becomes impossible to lower it, and the limb withers to a mere stick. This certainly is not a penance of a light nature ; but when a man is encountered holding not only one, but both arms aloft, stiff and withered, pity strives for mastery with amazement.

It is with sincere regret that the writer has to chronicle the death of the subject of the present picture. Since the foregoing remarks were written, he fell a victim to the terrible scourge which has ravaged the city of Bombay. A pattern of industry, honesty and truth, respected by every one with whom he came in contact, he leaves a blank which it will be difficult to fill.

BRÀHMAN LADY.

Ladies in all parts of the world are proverbially coy, and none are more so than Hindoos—unless it be Mohamedans. It is against the custom of the higher castes to be photographed at all, and only by dint of much persuasion can they be induced to overcome their prejudices in this respect, and then it is necessary for them to be accompanied by their lawful spouse.

The habit of piercing the nose and ornamenting it with rings is usually observed among all classes of native women, the more wealthy among them frequently wearing jewels of great value in their noses. The fact that European visitors are amused at a person whose nose is pierced for the purposes of adornment, and yet regard an earring as an every-day affair, exemplifies, in a marked manner, what a curious and narrow-minded tyrant is "custom." On the wrists are worn bangles of gold, silver or glass, while the ankles are adorned with anklets usually made of silver. The feet, being bare, present a further opportunity for adornment, which is not allowed to be lost, and massive silver rings are therefore frequently worn upon some of the toes of each foot.

In India, as indeed all over the world, it is the women who wear the most brilliant costumes. But the French cynic, who described the country as one where "the flowers have no smell, the fruits no taste, and the women no modesty," was very much mistaken in his estimate of the latter. True it is that a Hindoo

BRĀHMAN LADY.

woman, of whatever class, feels no shame in exposing her nether limbs to the knee, but it is to her a fearful and a wonderful thing that English memsahibs should exhibit themselves in public in an attire which reveals to the world a large proportion of the upper part of their bodies. Even a coolie woman—be she young or old—will draw her *sari* carefully over the top of her head and round her neck in the company of a stranger. Faults the women of India may have, but immodesty is certainly not among them.

A native girl is usually betrothed at a very tender age, and, as this ceremony is binding upon both the contracting parties, it is usually alluded to as a "marriage." Ten years of age—or younger—is not considered an inappropriate time of life to perform this ceremony. But, as a matter of fact, the juvenile bride does not live with her husband until she arrives at maturity, and, although this is necessarily at an earlier period in her existence than in that of a European, it is a mistake to suppose that Indian women habitually consort with their spouses before they are physically fit to do so. But there are manifold exceptions to this rule, and the exceptions constitute a great evil, against which social reformers have nobly battled for some years past.

THE PARSEE.

The advantages derived by the natives of India from the British conquest of the country have in no instance been so marked as among the Parsees. Before that event had been consummated, they were literally the hewers of wood and drawers of water for their rulers, whereas at the present time they have been enabled to become one of the most enlightened and wealthy races in the West of India. The hat worn by the Parsees is not their own original form of *topi*, although frequently regarded as such, but is similar to that worn by a section of the inhabitants of Gujerat.

They are of Persian origin, having fled from their country about the year 716, in order to escape from the tyrannies of their Mohamedan conquerors, and are supposed to have first settled in the island of Diew, near the coast of Kathiawar; shortly afterwards, however, they changed their quarters for Gujerat. Here they were only permitted to remain on condition that they adopted the language of the country and dressed their women in Indian garb. At the present day their community numbers about 70,000 persons, inclusive of those who have settled in China and elsewhere. Very few Parsees engage in agricultural pursuits, nor do we find a single soldier among them. Many learn trades, and the commercial world in general finds numerous recruits from their ranks.

The indoor male costume consists of a muslin shirt, a pair of loose white cotton trousers, a cotton waistcoat with sleeves, a skull cap and slippers. For

PARSEE.

outdoor wear, a long loose coat of cotton or cloth is added, and, in addition to the cap, a hat or turban is worn. There is also a special costume, worn only on the occasion of a funeral and a wedding, which consists of a long double-breasted white cotton coat, gathered in at the waist by a broad white sash, and reaching to the ankles.

A peculiarity of the Parsees is their manner of disposing of the dead. In Bombay, and certain other large towns in Western India, they have erected what are called "Towers of Silence." These consist of circular structures, built of stone, from twenty to thirty feet high, the diameter of the largest being ninety feet. Inside the tower is a circular pavement, shelving towards the centre, which terminates in what may be called a well, forming the centre of the tower. On this pavement are three circular rows of wide grooves, about an inch in depth, in which the bodies are deposited. In the course of about an hour vultures have completely stripped the flesh from the bones, which are afterwards thrown into the pit in the middle of the tower, where they eventually crumble into dust.

The Parsees are followers of the Zoroastrian faith, which admits of the belief in a Supreme Being; but the very prevalent supposition that they are worshippers of the sun, or of fire, has no foundation in fact. In offering prayers, their faces are turned towards the sun, as being one of the most powerful symbols of the Almighty, and from this has probably arisen the mistaken notion.

PARSEE LADY.

There are no such gaily attired women in the world as the Parsees. Their costumes, though similar in form to those of the Hindoos, usually comprise less vivid colours—pale pink, sea green and lemon being favourite shades. The younger members of the community wear stockings, and shoes of English shape.

A strange old custom in Parsee society is for the head of both males and females to be always covered, although there does not appear to be any other reason for this than long usage. The men, when not wearing their outdoor head-covering, put on a round cap, flat at the top, but as this is apparently in many instances only worn to comply with the letter rather than the spirit of the injunction, it is not infrequently worn so small as to forcibly remind us of the appearance of the humble companion of the organ grinder, minus the chin strap. The article worn by the women over their hair is known as a *mathabana*, and resembles a white pocket-handkerchief. Its use does not improve their personal appearance. In the walking costume, however, the *sari*, or outside garment, is passed round the shoulders and over the top of the head, so that the *mathabana* is unobserved, and the *tout ensemble* is then very graceful.

The most earnest desire and the highest ambition of a Parsee damsel is to secure an eligible husband, but she stands no chance whatever of

PARSEE LADY.

becoming a bride unless her father pays, and pays handsomely, for the honour. A dowry is necessary, and the older the maiden, the larger the qualifying accompaniment has to become. It is by no means uncommon for a man earning a monthly salary of thirty rupees, to spend six months' earnings upon the marriage of his daughter. This is not done from a wanton disregard of due economy, but because it is *dastoor*—custom—and custom and caste are the two most far-reaching words in the vocabulary of the continent of Hindustan, to whatever class of natives the words may be applied.

Parsees usually take three meals a day, the constituents of which very nearly resemble those of Europeans. It was formerly the custom for the men to eat first, and then allow the women to finish what was left, after the fashion still adopted by the Hindoos. But of late this, and many other old habits, have fallen into disuse, and the meals are now taken together, the family being seated at a table, instead of squatting upon the floor.

PARSEE SCHOOL GIRL.

Among the many strange costumes which attract the eye of a new comer, few appear so grotesque as that of the Parsee young lady, when at that stage of her existence which is prior to the assumption of her outer garment. One gets used to many things in India, but to see a little damsel of ten or eleven years of age, skipping about, without the semblance of either a frock or a petticoat, is at first sight a comical picture.

Her jacket may be of cloth, or of cotton, or silk, according to the season, but it is always cut in the same style, falling just below the waist. Sometimes little coloured silk or satin trousers are worn, reaching to the ankle, and then of course the absence of either a frock or a *sari* is not so noticeable. Most young Parsee girls have their hair done up in a knob at the back of the head, as shown in the picture, but this is merely a matter of taste, it being occasionally allowed to hang loose upon the shoulders. A cap, similar in shape to the undress cap worn by the male members of the community, is always their form of headgear, unless a European costume is adopted, and then it is not infrequently difficult to distinguish the little wearer from an English child, except from her surroundings, as the complexion of many Parsees is very fair. A few are really brown, it is true, but the majority are little darker than the inhabitants of southern Europe. Considering how fluently the men usually speak

PARSEE SCHOOL GIRL.

English, it is surprising to note that the Parsee women folk, as a body, know relatively little of our language. Occasionally, however, we have exceptions to the rule, and there are now living in Bombay several young Parsee ladies who, having qualified themselves by passing the necessary examinations, are earning their living as medical practitioners.

THE BANIA.

This word itself is not significant of a particular caste, as is the case with the word Bràhman, but means a trader, or merchant, being more particularly applied to dealers in grain ; and as the European game of "cornering the market" is not unknown, there are very many of these gentry whose wealth is considerable.

In India, the son nearly always follows the profession or business of his father. It consequently follows that we have the Bania class, the bootmaker class, the tailors, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the ghariwallahs or coachmen—all forming separate classes or castes to themselves. Taken as a whole, the Banias are perhaps the least educated of any of the middle class natives of the present day. Not that this implies that they are lacking in business capacity—rather the reverse—for, while youths of many other castes are spending years at school, and afterwards at college, passing examinations and taking degrees, the Bania young man is busily engaged in studying the tricks of his business, and, be it said, they are manifold. It is therefore not surprising to find that the Bania ranks among the richest in the community, especially when it is remembered that his wants are few and his habits simple. He may have a large house and many servants, with a rubber-tyred carriage drawn by a pair of high-stepping Arab steeds. On certain state occasions, too, he can—and does—adorn his person with purple and fine linen. But when enjoying the privacy of his own house, he wears a cloth around his loins, and nothing besides. He has

BANIA.

a large apartment, gaudily furnished, which is reserved for state occasions, but his custom is usually to occupy a small room in the rear of the house, where he squats on the ground and eats his rice, as from time immemorial, with his fingers.

NÀTCH GIRLS.

On special occasions, such as weddings or parties given in honour of a distinguished visitor, it is the correct thing in native society to give a nàtch. The guests assemble in a large room set apart for the purpose, and seat themselves upon chairs ranged against the walls. At one end of the room, upon the ground, are seated the nàtch party, consisting usually of two girls and their attendant musicians, who may be three, four, or more in number, according to the status of the dancers.

The girls are amazingly arrayed in costumes of gorgeous hues, plentifully bespangled with gold, while anklets of tiny silver bells make a soft tinkling sound at every movement of their feet. Behind them stand the musicians, one of whom accompanies the rest upon a tom-tom or native drum, without which no nàtch could possibly proceed.

When all the guests have arrived, the girls rise to their feet and, accompanied by the strains of the band, one of them proceeds to advance and retreat in slow and measured steps, waving her arms and rattling the bells upon her ankles in time with the music. The other dancer then does likewise, after which follows a song. All Eastern tunes are set in minor keys, and, if we may judge by results, the singer who is capable of bringing forth the notes with the strongest nasal accent is worthy of most praise. It requires an intimate knowledge of the language to be able to follow a song sung in the vernacular; but, if the opinions of the

HINDOO NĀTCH GIRLS.

MOHAMEDAN NĀTCH GIRL.

MADRAS NĀTCH PARTY.

natives themselves may be taken upon the subject, the sentiments expressed by the singers on these occasions are poetical indeed.

The proceedings are varied by first one girl and then the other advancing and retiring, chanting the while in a highly pitched key, and afterwards both advance and retire together. This is continued with slight intervals for many hours, the songs varying according to the occasion and the time of the year, each season having its particular set of melodies. A European has usually had as much of the performance in an hour as he can endure at one sitting, but it is a no uncommon thing for natives to sit up the whole night listening to the music, and watching the gliding movements of the dancers.

THE SNAKE-CHARMER.

Although the so-called "snake-charmer" is usually a sharp witted and oft-times a clever fellow, it is his conjuring which forms his chief claim to attention. True, he carries a hideous cobra, and performs sundry antics with the reptile, generally winding up by going round for contributions to his treasury with the snake around his neck. But everybody knows that the poisonous fangs have been extracted, and the snake-charming show is usually neither entertaining nor original.

It is when he brings forth from an old and dirty sack the little implements with which he deceives the eye of the beholder, that an exhibition of his skill may be looked for. For he has none of the accessories of the European professor of legerdemain—no table, and no convenient pockets in the tail of a voluminous dress coat—very frequently indeed he has no coat at all. Many of the tricks performed by these itinerant wanderers would do credit to a first-rate professional conjurer at home, and, although some of them may be learned on payment of a small fee, there are others of which Europeans have never been able to learn the secret. The "basket trick" is a very clever one, and certainly appears to contain an element of the marvellous. A large basket is inverted, and under this is placed a boy. The performer then plunges a sword through the basket, while at the same time piercing shrieks are heard. After a few moments the boy appears running up from a distance, and, upon the basket being overturned, nothing is found beneath it.

SNAKE CHARMER.

Another very common and equally clever trick is that of producing a mango plant, often as much as two feet high, from a mango-stone. But one of the most astonishing tricks ever witnessed by the writer, was that recently performed by a Hindoo in Lucknow. He had been through all the old well worn business, and was asked if he had nothing to show that was really good—something that was also new. He had. This trick, he said, was one for which the Sahib would reward him, he was inclined to think, to the extent of at least five rupees. He proceeded to place three small marbles of wood beneath three little cups of the same material arranged in a row. Then he removed the two outer cups, and under the centre one were the three marbles. So far there was nothing at all out of the common, as he was informed in no measured tone. He replaced the cup over the marbles and asked a lady present to raise it. Imagine the surprise of all present, when, upon the cup being lifted, a number of tiny little birds hopped in all directions from beneath it. The most curious part of this exceedingly clever trick lay in the fact that it was afterwards found impossible to cover even two of the birds with the cup from which they had been liberated.

MELON SELLER.

This picture represents a woman of the Kùlmbi caste, who is not by any means to be confounded with a coolie. A very low caste woman would find but few purchasers for her wares, which, being edible, nobody would buy from a person whose social status was not considered sufficiently high.

The dress of all Hindoo women is very similar in character, the chief difference lying in the texture of the garments worn. Those of the poorer classes are of coloured cotton, and the outer garment, or *sari*, is first wound round the body, in a fashion similar to that adopted by the men, but, unlike them, they then carry it over the back and head, forming at once a skirt, a bodice, and a covering for the head. The bracelets worn by the poorer classes of women are usually made of coloured glass, and occasionally of silver, while silver rings frequently adorn their fingers and toes. The fruit sellers of Bombay of both sexes purchase their wares from the Arthur Crawford Market, which is one of the finest and largest in the East. It is under the care of the Municipality and is exceedingly well looked after. There is a large central hall, over which is a clock-tower ; on the right, an avenue, measuring 150 by 100 feet, is devoted to fruits and flowers ; the left, which is double that length, being reserved for vegetables and spices. A garden at the side of the market affords a space for several little shops, where poultry, parrots, minars and other birds are on sale.

MELON SELLER.

The panels over the central entrance of the market, representing the various races of India, were sculptured by Mr. Kipling, the father of the well-known author.

Very little fruit indeed, with the exception of plantains, is grown in Bombay, the consequence being that it is comparatively an expensive item by the time the charges for freight and coolie hire have been added to the original cost of the fruit itself. Although not a very cheap luxury, there are many varieties when in season, the mango ranking among the most expensive and best appreciated. Pineapples are plentiful, and oranges can be had nearly all the year round from Nasik or Nagpore ; grapes there are also, but not good ones. Apples, too, from Cabul, but only fit for puddings. Green figs, melons, pappiya and bread-fruit are also to be bought in their respective seasons.

WÀSUDEV BEGGAR.

There are beggars and beggars, from the Hindoo ascetic, who, after renouncing the lusts of the flesh, wanders from shrine to shrine, and meditates upon matters holy, to the gentleman delineated in the accompanying picture, who begs because he is built that way. Members of this particular caste have certain curious habits peculiar to themselves, and their headgear, if not their dress, is strikingly original. On the principle that the early bird catches the worm, they commence their rounds at three o'clock in the morning, standing outside a house and tinkling the little brass bell, which is one of their trade-marks, as an accompaniment to a doleful chant for alms. Patience and importunity are personified in an Eastern beggar. You may disregard his presence in the vain hope of driving him away in despair, and this, indeed, is usually the first method of procedure. But in no part of the wide world is the force of inertia better understood. He is used to cold neglect, and much more besides, so he calmly waits. Disregard may be followed by adjectives, but still he heedeth not. He's used to that too. He repeats the monotonous wail, to the effect that he is a very poor man, a very hungry man, and has not the wherewithal to fill his internal economy. And as the smallest of coins is sufficient to rid one of his undesirable presence—even though in going he curse your want of liberality—he not infrequently reaps his reward.

But be it here remarked that, unless prepared to repeat the donation at frequent intervals, this method of

WASUDEV BEGGAR.

treatment is not to be thought of, except as a means of temporary palliation. For your beggar, be he black or otherwise, has a knack peculiarly his own, of never deserting his benefactors. On leaving your office at the end of the day, you are perhaps induced to give a coin to one of the many blind mendicants who swarm the thoroughfares. Henceforth he invariably awaits your coming, and, his youthful guide having marked you down, his persistent importunities move you to much profanity.

The Wàsudev beggar does not usually beg from Europeans, the reason probably being that he only "works" from three o'clock to eight a.m. One of the peculiarities of the native is his passion for remaining awake till all hours of the night, and, on festive occasions, the whole night long, as many a long suffering Anglo-Indian can testify, the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the country at such times not being conducive to slumber within a radius of half a mile of the scene of gaiety.

The most original of stage managers could surely never conceive for a Christmas pantomime a more grotesque form of hat than that worn by the Wàsudev beggar. Shaped like a sugar loaf of huge proportions, the top part of it is covered with gold tinsel, while the lower half is gaily ornamented with peacocks' feathers.

A MOHAMEDAN.

This portrait represents a Mohamedan dressed in the full costume worn by Mussalmans from the North-West Provinces. It will be noticed that the turban is twisted into a peculiar shape, full at each side and falling below the ears, while the trousers are almost close-fitting to the leg below the knee, and are fastened by buttons from the calf downwards. The boots are of patent leather, adorned with large silver buckles. The undress costume consists of a small oblong skull cap, and, while no coat is worn, a waistcoat, generally of a gorgeous colour, plentifully sprinkled with gold or silver spangles, in front and rear, is exposed to view. The majority of Mohamedans to be found in the North-West Provinces are of sturdy build, a fact which is not so noticeable in those coming from other parts of India.

The great Mohamedan festival of the year is the "Mohurram," and on this and similar occasions precautions are always necessary on the part of the police to prevent a conflict between the Hindoos and the followers of the Prophet. The better class natives do not take part in the processions which parade the streets on such days, it being chiefly the rabble who delight in these festivals, which are always a nuisance to the town in which they are held.

It is curious how inconsistent are the English in their government of India. We permit all kinds of native nuisances, obstructions and din, provided

MOHAMEDAN.

they have for their alleged *raison d'etre* a "religious prejudice." We are very strong on the subject of religious prejudices, and wouldn't for worlds interfere with one in any way whatever. This fact is duly appreciated by the native, who, making a mental note of it, carefully arranges accordingly, and when requested by those presumably in authority to do what does not please him, he replies, with an inward chuckle, that his religious prejudices prevent him from complying. And that settles the matter.

There exists in Bombay at the time of writing, a native prejudice in favour of carrying on an open bier, through the public thoroughfares, the corpses of people who have died of the plague. If the body is that of a Hindoo, it is burnt, and that is doubtless the best method of disposing of it. But when the burning ground is so situated that the bodies can be plainly seen from the road—that road being the one and only drive in the town—and the smoke from the funeral pile blows, charged with the ashes of burnt wood and an abominable odour of charred flesh, into the eyes and nostrils of each and every passer-by, it not unnaturally suggests the thought that the prejudices of the European community against the custom might, with advantage, be also taken into consideration by way of a pleasing change.

THE POSTMAN.

In whatever part of the world we may reside, there is always a degree of interest attaching to the postman, whether he be black, white or brown. The familiar "rat-tat" of the English postman is unknown in India—possibly because there are no knockers, and in many cases no doors. But we hear in its stead the remark of the butler, as he brings us our morning dâk or English mail—"Chitti hai," he says, and if he has not been too greatly spoiled by the influences of a free English education, it is possible he may also condescend to address you as Sahib, or Sir.

As a rule the tapal-wallah, as he is called, does not read English, and the name of the person to whom the letter is addressed is frequently to be found, written in the vernacular, on the back of the letter. Government provide the men with a good serviceable blue dungaree uniform, and a waterproof cape during the monsoon. Sandals are worn more often than boots, and, when the rains arrive, the trousers are exchanged for knicker-bockers.

In Ceylon, in districts where the mails are light, and the roads either bad or non-existent, Tamils are employed as "runners" between one village and another. They are clothed with little more than a dhotie, and armed with a short stick, to defend themselves against the possible attack of either robbers or snakes. A Tamil tapal runner will go at a good swinging trot for hours—a run of twenty miles or so being looked upon as a mere nothing.

POSTMAN.

At Christmas time our postman does not omit to remind us that it is an occasion for the donation of buksheesh, nor is he alone in this particular; every man, woman or child, whom duty brings into the shadow of your presence, comes to "say salaam." Even those not included in the above category "say salaam," also. The man who brings round the tax papers adds insult to injury by joining the crowd, and, when asked what service he may have rendered to entitle him to remuneration, replies that, although it is true his arduous labours are not entirely on your account, yet, as he is willing to do anything that may be required in the future, surely he will not be forgotten?

THE BENGALI.

As in the case of the Marwari, the Punjabi, the Madrassi and others, the Bengali derives his name from the province in which he is born. He wears no turban, nor does he shave any part of his head, his hair being cut short in a similar fashion to that adopted by Europeans. His shirt is also of European pattern, although the manner in which it is worn is peculiar to the East, it being regarded as the outer garment, and the tails thereof allowed to flutter in the wind.

The Bengali, or as he is more often termed, the Bengali Baboo, belongs to a class who are as little distinguished for courage as any race in the world. It is not uncommon indeed for them to expatiate upon their own extreme cowardice, as if alluding to a special gift. They are consequently thought little of by all the up-country tribesmen of the North-West, many of whom are soldiers born, and consequently do not take kindly to a people who are wanting both in physical strength and moral courage.

It is to the Bengali Baboo that we are indebted for furnishing a name for the many curious examples of English composition with which most of us are familiar, although these marvellous epistles also emanate from natives of the other Presidencies. The following is a portion of a letter recently received by the writer, in answer to an advertisement for a Press Reader :—

"I beg apology for intrusion in valuable precious moments, and request you to endure a little patients in

BENGALI.

reading following fully, reckoning this as it were to be my soliloqy. I am much liked for the acrimonious and prompt way I execute work . . . . Being much disheartened of my sterile labours, took into head that some trade is far superior to being clerk, have prelibated printing, and been employed in almost all the printing offices. Finally I was conducting the bumper work of municipality. I have had great and responsible business . . . to keep my books up to the mark, give daily accounts of contents of each stores, weighment and other sickening works." This effusion concluded with the expression of a "full hope of your honour's entire approbation and emoluments."

Another amusing letter, written in a flowing hand, was the following :—

"Sir,—Has the honour to inform you, that the undersigned wants a Directory. Calendar Directory. Time of India that a Globe Directory. 2. Please inform its prices of each copy of the 1897, or of the 1896. As the undersigned are wants for necessarys of his firm. 4. Request that I had been missed your exact addresses. Please excuse it as in which all the residents, Civillion, and Military Troops & co & co. are written in the derictery. 5. Hope your kind and affectionate favour will be so good eno. Answer this firm the exact price of each coppy, that what will be charge of each; Reply by return of Mall. 6. By receiving an early reply we will be very much thankful & gratitude. 7. Also send your price in ful of your Directory. 8. Kindly answer soon. Your most sincerely i.e. Ram Lochun Ghose & Co. P.S.—Please send soon reply."

THE MARWARI.

This name is given to the people hailing from Marwar, and, although there is nothing therefore in the word itself to regard as opprobrious, it has come to be so viewed from the fact that most Marwaris combine with their other business that of money-lending.

Many of them are sellers of food stuffs, and one of the ingrained habits of the native (and—in justice one must add—occasionally that of a European) is never to live within his means unless obliged to do so by circumstances over which he has no control; and of this fact the Marwari is not slow to take advantage. He is willing to advance small sums to approved clients "upon personal security," and, as the month's food-supply can be obtained upon like terms, it is never paid for, among the poorer classes, in advance. When a wedding occurs, the Marwari is again called into requisition, for, of all people in this world, the native of India, from the middle class down to the sweeper, is the most improvident of beings, and provision for a rainy day is to him a thing unknown. It might be supposed that the knowledge of his having to pay a very high rate of interest would induce a tendency to provide against contingencies, but experience proves that nothing short of absolute force will have that desirable effect. He is perfectly willing to pay five rupees per month, for twelve months, to a money-lender for the loan of thirty rupees, but to put away three rupees of his own free will each pay-day is quite another matter, and not to be entertained for a

MARWARI.

minute. To quote the reply received upon a recent occasion, when such a course was suggested, " Why should I do that, when perhaps in a month I may be dead. Then someone else will spend my savings ! No, that may be the European way, but it is not our custom, and the wisdom of it is hard to find." Meanwhile the Marwari waxes fat, and his profits are large profits ; his ears are adorned with precious stones, and his neck with pearls. But the way of the native is inscrutable, and his customs are as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Yet, since it pleases him and hurts no one—especially the Marwari—why worry ?

A CÀBULI.

The accompanying picture represents a native of Càbul, and the dress is typical of that worn by most Afghàns. Those who visit the larger Indian towns are usually horse-dealers or their attendants, and may be distinguished by their loose baggy trousers and smocks. They are a hardy race of men, and usually excellent horsemen, although their movements, like those of most Asiatics, are slow and heavy. It was not without very considerable difficulty that one of their number was persuaded to be photographed. Of an exceedingly suspicious disposition, they all enquired the reason of a portrait being needed, and, when informed that it was for the purpose of showing, by the aid of a picture, how an Afghán was dressed, they one and all declared that that could not be the truth, as everybody knew that already!

Most of the Càbulis who are temporarily staying in Bombay are known to each other, and since they soon discovered that applications for sittings had been made to several of their number, they were much exercised in their minds to decide upon what was likely to be the real reason for this unusual demand. After discussing the subject for some weeks among themselves, they eventually came to the conclusion that the photograph was required for the purpose of sending it to Her Majesty, who would, upon receiving it, order the immediate execution of the sitter! A clearer instance of the proverb concerning a "guilty conscience" could scarcely be found. By dint of re-

CÄBULI.

peated assurances to the contrary, however, and of solemn promises to hold him blameless, one of the number at last allowed himself to be driven to the studio, and by dint of pressure brought to bear, in the shape of promised buksheesh, he was finally induced to face the camera.

THE PERSIAN.

It may perhaps be objected that a Persian is not a native of India, and should therefore have no place in this little volume, but as there are now many Persian families who have permanently settled in this country, and adopted in a measure the costume of their co-religionists, it is thought that an illustration showing their costume will not be out of place.

There is a considerable trade in tea carried on between India and Persia, the larger portion of which is shipped to Bunder Abbas *vid* Bombay. Tea is the largest item of export between the two countries, being followed by indigo and cotton goods. A quantity of Cashmere shawls are also shipped, and also tin and copper sheeting, drugs and spices. Indigo is largely used in Central Asia for the purpose of dyeing cotton and silk, for staining glass, and in the manufacture of blue and white enamelled tiles. From it is also made the hair dye which is in very general use among the natives of India, and this accounts for the peculiar blue tinge frequently observed in the bushy black beard of many an ancient Mohamedan.

The Persian Gulf is always more or less associated with the idea of piracy and murder, on the subject of which many tales might be told. The following story, however, will suffice as an example.

A Bombay merchant, having visited Muscat for the purpose of trade, set out on his return voyage in his native sailing boat, known as a "buggalow." The captain of the vessel was a Beluchi, and during

PERSIAN.

the voyage this man formed the notion of plundering the merchant of all he was worth. Having informed the crew of his nefarious scheme, and obtained their promise of assistance, he accordingly butchered the merchant during the night, together with those who would have stood by him. The murderers thereupon took a solemn oath to keep inviolate secrecy, and having transferred the plunder to some date jars, they one and all, nineteen in number, embarked in the long boat and set fire to the buggalow, to hide all traces of their guilt. Six of the men, however, fell victims to the captain's suspicions, and were cruelly slaughtered; two others, fearful of the fate of their companions, leapt overboard when the boat neared the coast, and made their way to their native town. Asked why they had returned so soon, they replied that their vessel caught fire, and they had thrown themselves into the sea. The British Agent at Muscat having doubts as to the truth of the story, they were arrested, and upon full pardon being promised them, they confessed the whole story. After endless search and trouble, the captain of the burnt vessel was ultimately apprehended, and upon learning that evidence was forthcoming to convict him, he admitted his guilt, and threw himself on the mercy of his captors. The matter of his trial was referred to the Bombay Government, who desired that he might be tried by the native court at Muscat. His Excellency Syed Soweynee, however, conceived it unnecessary to go through that formality, and promptly had the culprit executed off hand.

JEWISH PRIEST.

The subject of this picture is a Jewish priest from Bagdad. There are a considerable number of Jews in Bombay, and the richest family in all India—the Sassoons—are Bagdad Jews, who established their mercantile firm in Bombay more than half a century ago. They are immensely rich, and their generosity in the matter of donations towards embellishing the city is well known.

Sir Albert Sassoon, who was the head of the firm until his death in October 1896, left Bombay about twenty-five years ago, and settled in Brighton, where he passed his time in comparative retirement. His father, the late Mr. David Sassoon, was long established as a merchant in Bagdad, and his ancestors before him. At one time he occupied an important financial position under the Turkish Government, but was driven from his native town, by pestilence, in 1834, and first migrated to Bushire, afterwards establishing himself in Bombay. Here the trade between this city and Bagdad was greatly fostered, and it is due to his influence, in conjunction with that of the Ezras, the Gubbays, and other Jewish families, that the business between India and Mesopotamia is now financed in Bombay. Their operations have extended to the Persian Gulf, to the interior of Persia, to China, and even to Japan, finally being centred in London.

To give instances of some of the many benefactions made by the Sassoon family, it may be

JEWISH PRIEST.

mentioned that large sums of money were devoted towards constructing the Sassoon Hospital and the Industrial Alms-house at Poona, the Reformatory at Bombay, and the Clock Tower at the Victoria Gardens, and many contributions made to the Sailors' Home at Bombay and at Hongkong. Over £12,000 were given towards the Mechanics' Institute in the former city, and this institution can now boast of a library which is second only to the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society's Library. The Sassoon Dock at Lower Colaba was the first wet dock in Western India, and its construction is said to have led the Government of Bombay to promote the construction of the large Prince's Dock, without which the ever-growing imports and exports of the Presidency could not well be carried on.

Sir Albert Sassoon had the honour of Knighthood conferred upon him, and, in the same year, the Corporation of London presented him with the Freedom of the City, a distinction which was the first of its kind ever bestowed on a foreigner.

THE BHISTI.

A very useful man is the Bhīsti, and, relatively speaking, a hardworking individual. He carries upon his hip the entire skin of a goat, the body and legs of which are sewn up, the neck only being left open. This is called a *mussock*, and it is with this utensil that he performs the many duties of his calling.

It might be supposed that for the purpose of carrying water from one place to another, a pail would be the more convenient article, but the very good, and to him all powerful, reason that he always has used a *mussock*, and his father always used one before him, precludes the remotest possibility of his being able to grasp the advantages of any other means of transfer. The Bhīsti is not alone in this peculiarity. There was once a planter who—being new to manners Eastern—thought to economise time and labour by providing his coolies with wheelbarrows, in place of the little conical baskets with which labourers customarily transport earth. On going to see what strides the resources of civilisation had enabled them to make with their work, he found the coolies carrying the barrows on their heads, that being, as they averred, the only possible way of getting over the difficulty of the new arrangement. They stated their opinion that the baskets were by far the more convenient, although they fully appreciated the kind forethought of the Sahib in providing the barrow with a wheel, with which to enable the poor coolie to amuse himself.

The Bhīsti it is who sprinkles our roads, who brings our drinking water, fills our baths, and in

BHĪSTI, OR WATER CARRIER.

time of war, carries the cooling draught to the wounded. The remarkable courage occasionally exhibited by Mohamedan bhīstis under fire is well known. It is stated that at the time of the distribution of Mutiny honours, a Colonel of English Cavalry was asked to select a man from his regiment who had specially distinguished himself, that he might be honoured by the receipt of the V. C. The regimental bhīsti was chosen as being the man who had exceeded in deeds of daring every soldier in the regiment. On learning that a bhīsti could not be the recipient, the Commanding Officer refused to name anyone else, on the ground that, although many acts of bravery had been performed by his men, none could be compared with the heroism of the regimental water-carrier. So it wasn't given.

THE ARAB.

In like manner to the Càbulis, the Arabs in India are mainly dealers in horses. In Bombay especially numbers of these men are to be met, and their strange dress and picturesque appearance must be the excuse for embodying a representative of their little colony among the other pictures in this book.

The Arab steed competes very closely for supremacy with his brother, the Waler, and as no mares are ever allowed to be shipped from Arabia, the many thousands of Arab horses in use in India are all imported, the trade forming a very large and lucrative business to the men engaged. Most of the animals are sent from one or other of the provinces bordering on the Persian Gulf.

One of the objects of interest noted in the guide books to Bombay are the Arab Stables in the Bhendi Bazaar, where at times are to be seen some of the finest horses in the East. Prices vary very considerably, for while it is sometimes possible to get a tolerable animal for Rs. 300, the average outlay necessary for the purchase of a good carriage horse is two or three times that amount, while a first-class animal will realise double that again, or even more. It may be superfluous to remark that all the best and most expensive Arabs are in the possession of natives—they being the only people who can afford such luxuries in these days of the depreciated and unregenerate rupee!

ARAB.

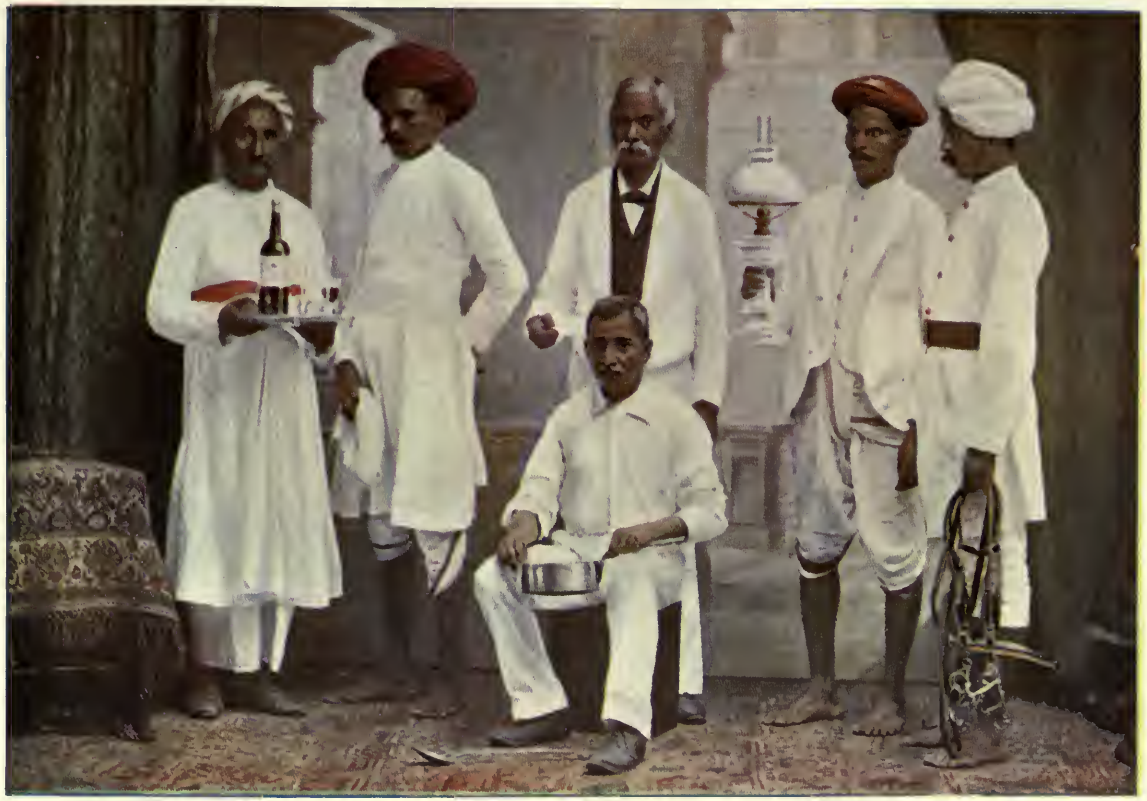
NATIVE SERVANTS.

It has been said, with some amount of truth, that natives of India make excellent servants, but one of the qualifying conditions lies in the necessity of knowing how to manage them. It is requisite that the exact amount of license be allowed them, and no more, for, if not permitted to exercise their accustomed privileges in the matter of perquisites, in connection with the bazaar purchases and otherwise, they feel deeply aggrieved, and, giving as a reason the alleged sickness of their maternal uncle, which necessitates their immediate departure for their "country," they are seen no more. A very careful line, however, must always be drawn, and having allowed a more or less wide margin for *dastoori*, it is inadvisable to submit—to use plain English—to further extortion and robbery. Honesty is to some extent a question of degree, and the point of view of the Asiatic differs materially from that of the European; for, while a man always robs you over the monthly bazaar account to the utmost limit of his ability, he may be above suspicion—but this is not to be regarded as by any means a certainty—in the matter of valuables or money entrusted to his care.

The number of servants in various households naturally differs to a great extent, but the smallest bachelor establishments usually find it necessary to employ at least five persons, of which the butler, or "bootliar" as the native has it, is the chief. It is

he whose proud privilege it is to go each morning to the bazaar, and buy the necessary food for the day's consumption; he it is who, provided you will stand it, imports into your larder the rejected scrag ends of the meat market, and mulcts you for the same at a rate in excess of that charged for the best joints. Should you object to this procedure, he at once explains that it is purely owing to his intense desire to study your pocket that he does not bring the best quality, upon the excessive price of which he then proceeds to expatiate. As it is a matter of impossibility for Europeans to ascertain the actual prices of things sold in the bazaar, these never remaining exactly similar for two days together, it may be imagined that the daily statement of purchases opens out a wide field for enterprise on the part of the butler, of which he is not slow to take the fullest advantage.

The marketings cannot be undertaken without the aid of the coolie, as the labour of carrying a basket of provisions would be far beneath the dignity of any other servant in the house. The cook has a mate, be the household ever so small, and, as Europeans have a habit of objecting to such a trifling annoyance as dust, it is necessary to employ a hamal—a gentleman whose chief duty would appear to be, if he may be judged by his actions, to flick the dust from one part of the room to the other, to mix up the papers on one's desk in inextricable confusion, and after removing certain books from their places, to carefully replace them, bottom uppermost. The massalchi also has his arduous duties, which chiefly consist of over-



BOMBAY SERVANTS.

filling the lamps with oil, and arranging the wicks in such a manner that they shall smoke with the least amount of provocation in the worst possible manner.

The work of the bearer, or dressing boy, is to lay out your clothes in the morning, to put the studs in your shirt, and leave the mark of his finger duly impressed upon the front thereof. He waits upon you at table, and considers that this and the task previously detailed constitutes a day's labour sufficiently arduous for any one man.

The syce, or groom, is a necessity in most bungalows, despite the advent of the bicycle, and this individual usually shares with the butler the honour of being a source of torment to his employer. In the accompanying illustration he is shown on the right of the group, the massalchi coming next to him. The centre figure is the cook—a Goanese, as is also the dressing-boy in his rear—beside him being the hamal, the butler completing the list.

THE SINHALESE.

The dress of the men, in that bright isle "where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile," differs considerably from that of the native of India. This however does not apply to the women, who might very easily be mistaken for Hindoos by anyone who was not cognisant of certain small details. The men dress in a *comboy*, which is formed of a long piece of cloth, sewn together at the two ends. This resembles a skirt, but having no gathers in it, the top is equal in size to the width of the bottom. Any difficulty, however, which might be imagined to exist, is overcome by the wearer pleating up the garment in front, and then making one large lap of the whole from right to left. He then either rolls the *comboy* over at the top, by which means it is easily supported, or puts on a belt. A jacket of European cut, with a military shaped collar, is worn over a singlet; this together with a comb upon his head and sandals on his feet complete his attire.

Ceylon is the Emerald Isle of the East, and as rain is far more frequent there than in India, the island presents a never-ending panorama of tropical verdure of every shade, from the pale green lettuce-plant to the begonia, which is nearly black. Viewed in conjunction with the deep blue sky and dark red kabook roads, a most charming picture is formed, in nature's richest colours.

Of recent years Colombo has become an important port of call, and owing to the enterprise

SINHALESE.

of its European inhabitants it is still advancing by leaps and bounds. Streets have been widened, new and capacious buildings erected, and the whole town so altered and improved during the past ten years that one yearns in vain for a similar rate of progress in the city whose vainglorious boast it is to be the second in the Empire.

The Sinhalese very rarely work as coolies, either on tea estates or elsewhere, this work being almost exclusively carried on by Tamils, from Southern India. They are generally sharper than Hindoos, and when carefully trained are capable of making very good workmen.

One of the favourite, and it is to be supposed the most lucrative, of trades in Ceylon is that of jeweller. The island abounds in precious stones, of sorts, and the work of cutting, polishing and selling them, affords employment to a large number of natives, many of whom are Moors, or, as they are usually termed, Moormen, who have lived in Ceylon for generations.

The efforts of those gentry to dispose of worthless stones mounted in trashy settings, are amusing, but it becomes an expensive form of entertainment if the wiles of the lustre merchant are permitted to prevail. Good stones are to be bought, but never from the hawkers, and as the shopkeepers are very excellent judges of the London market value of their wares, a bargain is usually to the advantage of the vendor.

In few ports are passengers so much bothered by hawkers as in Colombo. They surround the ship and climb on board almost before the anchor is down, their presence frequently becoming a veritable nuisance, as they follow one round with great persistency in their endeavours to effect a sale. For the benefit of the uninitiated it may be remarked that there is a pass-word which effects a certain cure. Say quietly, as if you knew all about it, "Epah, pallian!" which, being interpreted, means "I don't want any, get!"; and your tormentor, regarding you as an individual acquainted with both his habits and his language, will promptly comply with your request.

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